WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, the distance-measuring device comprising:

a selection circuit for selecting at least one first measured distance-value by excluding second measured distance-values that are not smaller than a predetermined distance value, from individually measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions; and

a computation circuit for computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the at least one first measured distance-value selected by the selection circuit.

2. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein the computation circuit sets the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum permissible distance value when the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

3. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein the computation circuit computes the auto-focusing data value from a mean value of the at least one first measured distance-value selected by the selection circuit.

4. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein the computation circuit computes the auto-focusing data value from a majority of the at least one first measured distance-value selected by the selection circuit.

5. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from a focal distance of a lens used for auto-focusing.

6. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from an aperture value of a lens used for auto-focusing.

7. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 1, wherein a smallest measured distance-value serves as the auto-focusing data value when the measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions are not smaller than the predetermined distance value and are not selected by the selection circuit.

8. A camera including a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, the camera comprising:

a selection circuit for selecting at least one first measured distance-value by excluding second measured

distance-values that are not smaller than a predetermined distance value, from individually measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions;

a computation circuit for computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the at least one first measured distance-value selected by the selection circuit; and

a driving circuit for driving an image-forming lens in accordance with the auto-focusing data value computed by the computation circuit.

9. A camera according to Claim 8, wherein the computation circuit sets the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum permissible distance value when the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

10. A camera according to Claim 8, wherein the computation circuit computes the auto-focusing data value from a mean value of the at least one first measured distance-value selected by the selection circuit.

11. A camera according to Claim 8, wherein the computation circuit computes the auto-focusing data value from a majority of the at least one first measured distance-

value selected by the selection circuit.

12. A camera according to Claim 8, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from a focal distance of a lens used for auto-focusing.

13. A camera according to Claim 8, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from an aperture value of a lens used for auto-focusing.

14. A camera according to Claim 8, wherein a smallest measured distance-value serves as the auto-focusing data value when the measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions are not smaller than the predetermined distance value and are not selected by the selection circuit.

15. A method of measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions by a distance-measuring device comprising the steps of:

selecting at least one first measured distance-value by excluding second measured distance-values that are not smaller than a predetermined distance value, from individually measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions; and

computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

16. A measuring method according to Claim 15, wherein the computing step includes setting the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum permissible distance value when the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

17. A measuring method according to Claim 15, wherein the computing step includes computing the auto-focusing data value from a mean value of the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

18. A measuring method according to Claim 15, wherein the computing step includes computing the auto-focusing data value from a majority of the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

19. A measuring method according to Claim 15, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from a focal distance of a lens used for auto-focusing.

20. A measuring method according to Claim 15, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from an

aperture value of a lens used for auto-focusing.

21. A measuring method according to Claim 15, wherein a smallest measured distance-value serves as the auto-focusing data value when the measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions are not smaller than the predetermined distance value and are not selected.

22. A method of operating a camera including measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, the method comprising the steps of:

selecting at least one first measured distance-value by excluding second measured distance-values that are not smaller than a predetermined distance value, from individually measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions;

computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the selected at least one first measured distance-value; and

driving an image-forming lens in accordance with the computed auto-focusing data value.

23. A method of operating a camera according to Claim 22, wherein the computing step includes setting the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum

permissible distance value when the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

24. A method of operating a camera according to Claim 22, wherein the computing step includes computing the auto-focusing data value from a mean value of the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

25. A method of operating a camera according to Claim 22, wherein the computing step includes computing the auto-focusing data value from a majority of the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

26. A method of operating a camera according to Claim 22, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from a focal distance of a lens used for auto-focusing.

27. A method of operating a camera according to Claim 22, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from an aperture value of a lens used for auto-focusing.

28. A method of operating a camera according to Claim 22, wherein a smallest measured distance-value serves as the auto-focusing data value when the measured distance-values

to the plurality of distance-measured regions are not
smaller than the predetermined distance value and are not
selected.

29. A distance-measuring device for measuring
individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured
regions, the distance-measuring device comprising:

means for selecting at least one first measured
distance-value by excluding second measured distance-values
that are not smaller than a predetermined distance value,
from individually measured distance-values to the plurality
of distance-measured regions; and

means for computing an auto-focusing data value in
accordance with the at least one first measured distance-
value selected by the selection means.

30. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 29,
wherein the computing means includes means for setting the
auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum
permissible distance value when the computed auto-focusing
data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance
value.

31. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 30,
wherein the computing means includes means for computing the

auto-focusing data value from a mean value of the at least one first measured distance-value selected by the selection means.

32. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 29, wherein the computing means includes means for computing the auto-focusing data value from a majority of the at least one first measured distance-value selected by the selection means.

33. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 29, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from a focal distance of a lens used for auto-focusing.

34. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 29, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from an aperture value of a lens used for auto-focusing.

35. A distance-measuring device according to Claim 29, wherein a smallest measured distance-value serves as the auto-focusing data value when the measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions are not smaller than the predetermined distance value and are not selected by the selection means.

36. A camera including a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, the camera comprising:

selection means for selecting at least one first measured distance-value by excluding second measured distance-values that are not smaller than a predetermined distance value, from individually measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions;

computation means for computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the at least one first measured distance-value selected by the selection means; and

driving means for driving an image-forming lens in accordance with the auto-focusing data value computed by the computation means.

37. A camera according to Claim 36, wherein the computation means includes setting means for setting the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum permissible distance value when the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

38. A camera according to Claim 36, wherein the computation means includes means for computing the auto-focusing data value from a mean value of the at least one

first measured distance-value selected by the selection means.

39. A camera according to Claim 36, wherein the computation means includes means for computing the auto-focusing data value from a majority of the at least one first measured distance-value selected by the selection means.

40. A camera according to Claim 36, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from a focal distance of a lens used for auto-focusing.

41. A camera according to Claim 36, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from an aperture value of a lens used for auto-focusing.

42. A camera according to Claim 36, wherein a smallest measured distance-value serves as the auto-focusing data value when the measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions are not smaller than the predetermined distance value and are not selected by the selection means.

43. In a distance-measuring device for measuring

individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein comprising:

a first program code unit for selecting at least one first measured distance-value by excluding second measured distance-values that are not smaller than a predetermined distance value, from individually measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions, and

a second program code unit for computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

44. In a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein according to Claim 43, wherein the second program code unit includes a program code unit for setting the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum permissible distance value when the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

45. In a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable

program code units embodied therein according to Claim 43, wherein the second program code unit includes a program code unit for computing the auto-focusing data value from a mean value of the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

46. In a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein according to Claim 43, wherein the second program code unit includes a program code unit for computing the auto-focusing data value from a majority of the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

47. In a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein according to Claim 43, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from a focal distance of a lens used for auto-focusing.

48. In a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable

program code units embodied therein according to Claim 43, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from an aperture value of a lens used for auto-focusing.

49. In a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein according to Claim 43, wherein a smallest measured distance-value serves as the auto-focusing data value when the measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions are not smaller than the predetermined distance value and are not selected.

50. In a camera having a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein comprising:

a first program code unit for selecting at least one first measured distance-value by excluding second measured distance-values that are not smaller than a predetermined distance value, from individually measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions;

a second program code unit for computing an auto-focusing data value in accordance with the selected at least

one first measured distance-value; and

a third program code unit for driving an image-forming lens in accordance with the computed auto-focusing data value.

51. In a camera having a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein according to Claim 50, wherein the second program code unit includes a program code unit for setting the auto-focusing data value to a value equal to a minimum permissible distance value when the computed auto-focusing data value is smaller than the minimum permissible distance value.

52. In a camera having a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein according to Claim 50, wherein the second program code unit includes a program code unit for computing the auto-focusing data value from a mean value of the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

53. In a camera having a distance-measuring device for

measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein according to Claim 50, wherein the second program code unit includes a program code unit for computing the auto-focusing data value from a majority of the selected at least one first measured distance-value.

54. In a camera having a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein according to Claim 50, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from a focal distance of a lens used for auto-focusing.

55. In a camera having a distance-measuring device for measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein according to Claim 50, wherein the predetermined distance value is obtained from an aperture value of a lens used for auto-focusing.

56. In a camera having a distance-measuring device for

measuring individual distances to a plurality of distance-measured regions, a computer usable medium having computer readable program code units embodied therein according to Claim 50, wherein a smallest measured distance-value serves as the auto-focusing data value when the measured distance-values to the plurality of distance-measured regions are not smaller than the predetermined distance value and are not selected.